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TAGS: UNG / UR

SUBJECT: PROPOSED NEW ITEM IN UNGA ON PALESTINIAN ISSUE

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REF: USUN 3065

1. FOLLOWING IS BRIEFING PAPER FOR USE IN US-SOVIET PRE-
UNGA BILATERALS ON PROPOSED NEW PALESTINIAN ITEM.

2. THE PROBLEM: THE ARAB LEAGUE'S POLITICAL COMMITTEE
(COMPOSED OF ALGERIA, EGYPT, LEBANON, SYRIA AND THE ARAB
LEAGUE'S SYG) HAS DECIDED TO WORK FOR INSCRIPTION IN THE
AGENDA AND REPORTEDLY FOR ALLOCATION TO PLENARY OF A
SEPARATE ITEM ON "THE PROBLEM OF PALESTINE" IN THE 29TH
UNGA. WE UNDERSTAND THAT ARAB DELEGATIONS MET AT THE UN ON
SEPTEMBER 9 TO DEVELOP THEIR TACTICS AND OBJECTIVES CONCERN-
ING A UNGA DEBATE ON THIS ISSUE. EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR
GHORBAL CALLED UPON MR. SISCO ON SEPTEMBER 9 TO SEEK OUR
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UNDERSTANDING OF ARAB OBJECTIVES IN INTRODUCING THIS ITEM.

ISRAELI FOREIGN MINISTER ALLON SENT THE SECRETARY A MESSAGE ON SEPTEMBER 8 ASKING THAT THE US OPPOSE A RESOLUTION ON THIS ISSUE.

3. DISCUSSION: EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR GHORBAL INFORMED UNDER SECRETARY SISCO THAT ALTHOUGH THE ARAB LEAGUE HAD NOT YET DRAFTED ITS RESOLUTION ON "THE PROBLEM OF PALESTINE" IT INTENDS TO SEEK UNGA RECOGNITION THAT THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE COMPRISE A "NATION" AND ARE ENTITLED TO THE RIGHT OF SELF-DETERMINATION, AND TO OBTAIN UNGA RECOGNITION OF THE PLO AS THE LEGITIMATE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE. IN THIS CONNECTION, THE ARABS WILL REQUEST THE UNGA TO PERMIT THE PLO TO PRESENT ITS VIEWS TO THE ASSEMBLY. THE EGYPTIAN REPRESENTATIVE DECLARED THAT SUCH A RESOLUTION WOULD HELP GET THE PLO TO THE GENEVA CONFERENCE.

THE ISRAELI FOREIGN MINISTER EXPRESSED CONCERN OVER THE REPORTED INTENTION OF THE ARAB LEAGUE TO PRESS FOR A RESOLUTION ACKNOWLEDGING THE PALESTINIAN' RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION AND RECOGNIZING THE PLO AS THE SOLE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PALESTINIANS. ISRAEL HAS ASKED THAT THE US OPPOSE SUCH A RESOLUTION AS WE HAVE OPPOSED THE RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED DURING THE LAST FIVE UNRWA DEBATES CONCERNING THE POLITICAL RIGHT OF THE PALESTINIANS TO SELF-DETERMINATION (SEE UNGA RESOLUTION 3089D, 1973).

THE MAIN NEW ELEMENTS IN A RESOLUTION PRESENTLY CONTEMPLATED BY THE ARAB LEAGUE SEEM TO BE (A) RECOGNITION OF THE PLO AS THE LEGITIMATE OR SOLE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PALESTINIANS AND, (B) AFFIRMATION THAT THE PALESTINIANS COMPRISE "A NATION", THERE IS LITTLE DOUBT THESE TWO PROPOSITIONS WOULD BE ACCEPTED BY THE MAJORITY OF THE UNGA.

ONE OF THE ORIGINAL INTENTIONS MAY HAVE BEEN TO SEEK PERMANENT OBSERVER TO UN STATUS FOR PLO IN CONTEXT OF THE PROPOSED NEW ITEM, BUT MORE RECENT INFORMATION INDICATES THAT THE ARABS WILL LIMIT THEIR REQUEST FOR PLO PARTICIPATION TO RIGHT TO SPEAK WITHOUT A VOTE DURING PALESTINIAN DEBATE. NEVERTHELESS, WE CANNOT RULE OUT REQUEST FOR
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FORMAL OBSERVER STATUS FOR THE PLO, WHICH WOULD RAISE SERIOUS PROBLEMS FOR THE U.S. (THE SYG'S INFORMAL GUIDELINES FOR OBSERVER STATUS AT UN ARE (A) MEMBERSHIP IN AT LEAST ONE UN SPECIALIZED AGENCY AND (B) RECOGNITION AS SOVEREIGN STATE BY A SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF UN MEMBERS. THE PLO WOULD NOT MEET THIS CRITERIA). DURING THE 1973 AND 1972 UNGAS PLO SPOKE WITHOUT THE RIGHT TO VOTE IN THE SPECIAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE ON THE UNRWA AND HUMAN

RIGHTS TO ISRAELI OCCUPIED TERRITORIES ITEMS. (THE PLO MAINTAINS AN INFORMATION OFFICE IN NEW YORK WHICH HAS NO OFFICIAL STATUS WITH UN.) ALLOCATION OF THE NEW ITEM TO PLENARY MIGHT CAUSE PROBLEMS, BECAUSE AN INVITATION TO AN ORGANIZATION TO SPEAK BEFORE PLENARY (RATHER THAN BEFORE A UNGA COMMITTEE) WOULD BE UNPRECEDENTED.

4. SOVIET ATTITUDES: MIDDLE EAST AND PALESTINIAN ISSUES
-- IN THE UNGA

MOSCOW'S UNHAPPINESS WITH THE HIGHLY VISIBLE ROLE PLAYED BY THE US IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND BY THE DETERIORATION IN SOVIET-EGYPTIAN RELATIONS HAS CAUSED IT TO INTENSIFY ITS ACTIVITIES ELSEWHERE IN THE REGION. MOSCOW HAS PROVIDED ADDITIONAL ECONOMIC AND MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO SYRIA AND HAS MOVED CLOSER TO YASIR ARAFAT'S PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION. IN A SPEECH IN SOFIA, SEPTEMBER 8, PRESIDUM CHAIRMAN PODGORNÝ MOVED THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT A STEP FURTHER TOWARD SUPPORT OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A PALESTINIAN STATE BY SPEAKING OF THE "SOVEREIGN RIGHT" OF THE PALESTINIAN ARABS "TO ESTABLISH THEIR OWN STATEHOOD IN ONE FORM OR ANOTHER." ALTHOUGH IT IS TOO EARLY TO MAKE FIRM PREDICTIONS, MOSCOW WILL PROBABLY USE THE NEW PALESTINIAN UNGA ITEM FOR ITS PROPAGANDA PURPOSES, ALTHOUGH THERE IS YET NO CONCRETE EVIDENCE THAT MOSCOW IS BEHIND THIS PROPOSAL OR WAS EVEN A PARTY TO THE INTER-ARAB CONSULTATIONS ON IT.

WE CANNOT EXPECT SOVIET COOPERATION IN OUR EFFORT TO DAMPEN THE RHETORIC IN UNGA DEBATES EITHER ON THE MIDDLE EAST OR THE PALESTINIAN ITEMS FOR THE SAKE OF THE ONGOING NEGOTIATING PROCESS. WE CAN EXPECT SOVIET SUPPORT FOR AN ARAB-SPONSORED RESOLUTION INCLUDING RECOGNITION OF THE PLO
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AS THE LEGITIMATE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PALESTINIANS AND ACCORDANCE OF PERMANENT OBSERVER TO THE UN STATUS FOR THE PLO (IF THE LATTER PROPOSAL IS INITIATED BY THE ARABS).

THE USSR GIVES A HIGH PRIORITY TO THE RESUMPTION OF THE GENEVA CONFERENCE. SHOULD A RESOLUTION BE PROPOSED CALLING FOR THE TIMELY RESUMPTION OF THE GENEVA TALKS, IT WOULD SURELY RECEIVE SOVIET SUPPORT. THE AUGUST 4 SOVIET-PLO COMMUNIQUE EXPRESSED SOVIET SUPPORT FOR PLO PARTICIPATION AT GENEVA "EXERCISING EQUAL RIGHTS WITH OTHER PARTICIPANTS".

5. TALKING POINTS:

-- WE CONTINUE TO ADHERE TO THE PRINCIPLES CONCERNING THE MIDDLE EAST SET FORTH IN THE JOINT US-SOVIET

COMMUNIQUE ISSUED IN MOSCOW ON JULY 3, 1974. THAT COMMUNIQUE EMPHASIZES THE NEED TO REMOVE THE DANGER OF WAR IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND STATES THAT "THE ONLY ALTERNATIVE IS THE ACHIEVEMENT, ON THE BASIS OF SC RESOLUTION 338, OF A JUST AND LASTING PEACE SETTLEMENT IN WHICH SHOULD BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT THE LEGITIMATE INTERESTS OF ALL PEOPLES IN THE MIDDLE EAST, INCLUDING THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE, AND THE RIGHT TO EXISTENCE OF ALL STATES IN THE AREA".

-- WE CAN DECIDE OUR FINAL POSITION ON ANY PROPOSED UNGA ITEM OR RESOLUTION ONLY WHEN WE HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY REVIEW THE SPECIFIC PROPOSALS. WHEN WE ARE INFORMED ABOUT SPECIFICS OF THE PROPOSED ITEM, THE U.S. WILL HAVE TO WEIGH ITS ATTITUDE ON HOW WE WOULD RESPOND IN THE GA IN LIGHT OF OUR PRIMARY OBJECTIVE OF FACILITATING NEGOTIATIONS AMONG THE PARTIES LOOKING TOWARD A JUST AND PERMANENT MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT.

-- WE RECOGNIZE THAT IT IS NOT CLEAR NOW EXACTLY WHAT IS BEING PROPOSED. HOWEVER, WE WANT TO MAKE CLEAR AT THE OUTSET THE GENERAL PROBLEM WE FORESEE. ANY ACTION AT THE UNGA OF THE KIND WE UNDERSTAND THE SPONSORS MAY HAVE IN MIND WOULD TEND TO PRE-JUDGE THE ISSUE OF REPRESENTATION AT THE GENEVA CONFERENCE. AS WAS AGREED BETWEEN THE US AND THE USSR IN DRAFTING THE LETTER OF INVITATION TO THE CONFERENCE LAST DECEMBER AND BY THE PARTICIPANTS IN
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ACCEPTING THAT INVITATION, THE QUESTION OF OTHER PARTICIPANTS IN THE CONFERENCE FROM THE MIDDLE EAST IS TO BE DECIDED BY THE CONFERENCE ITSELF. THAT POSITION WAS REITERATED IN THE US-SOVIET COMMUNIQUE OF JULY 3, 1974.

-- WE WILL CONTINUE TO REGARD SC RESOLUTIONS 242 AND 338 AS THE FRAMEWORK FOR THE GENEVA PEACE CONFERENCE, AND THE NEGOTIATIONS ENDORSED BY RESOLUTION 338 AS THE MOST EFFECTIVE PLACE FOR RESOLVING ISSUES OF THIS KIND. WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT SUCH QUESTIONS AS HOW PALESTINIAN INTERESTS SHOULD BE REFLECTED IN THE NEGOTIATIONS SHOULD BE DEALT WITH AS PART THAT NEGOTIATING PROCESS. WE QUESTION THE USEFULNESS OF A UNGA RESOLUTION ADDRESSING THOSE ISSUES AT THIS POINT. KISSINGER

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